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PURE RELIGION AND UNDEFILED

Is the Guiding Spirit of the Order of Foresters
An Eloquent Sermon at Kensington
By Rev. J. A. Winfield, Preached to Court Hattie Stewart C. O. F.

Court Hattie Stewart, 808, Canadian Order of Foresters attended divine service in St. Mark's Church, Kensington, on Sunday last. The Court made a fine showing in their procession to the church. The sermon was preached by the Rev. J. A. Winfield and was an able and eloquent exposition of James 1-27. Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this, to visit the widow and fatherless in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

In commencing his sermon the Rev. Mr. Winfield said that religion is a Latin word and means a recognition of God as an object of worship, love and obedience. Religion is not a method but a life, it is a higher and supernatural life, practical in its results and works. The Apostle James only shows the negative view of the subject, indicating two features in religion, viz. benevolence and unworldliness. He does not mean that charity pure and undefiled religion. A wicked person can perform this act but when acts like these are done in order to serve God, and the doer is actuated by love of God then it becomes a religious act. If deeds such as the Apostle James describes in this verse are done without any notion of God, they are not a service as far as intention is concerned therefore not pure and undefiled religion. The ground work of true religion consists in obedience to the King of Kings. And to be religious is to adhere to these principles. Religion is the fruits of the spirit, Christian charity, true life, the source of good. It is using all for God. Men wrangle and argue about religion, write about it, fight for it, frequently have died for it, do anything but live it. Christ's religion is not a dogma, or an emotion [there is unfortunately too much of this today under the guise of religion]. It is not a theory or a coat to be put on. It is a blessed service, it is a fire which example keeps burning. It is a discipline. It is a yoke and that yoke is the yoke of Jesus Christ. St. Paul at the commencement of his epistles shows how it is worn. There are numbers of religions, but the religion of Jesus Christ is the ideal standard of true brotherhood. Visit the widow and fatherless in their affliction, providing for their needs and keeping yourselves unspotted from the world. An old quotation reads "To pity distress is human, to relieve it is Godlike". The world today is full of sorrow, sin and distress but the throb of the world's despair and sorrow is hushed by the voice of him who said "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest". Let us now look at another duty.

Men depend for existence by their labour. Their power to labour depends on their health. It is manifestly clear then, that when sickness and death comes if no provision has been made then sorrow and poverty follows. The duty of man for today is then made clear, viz he should make provision. And what better provision can he make than that which is offered by the Order of Foresters with a constitution of unity, work, action, combined with liberty and benevolence. There is much of christianity in your constitution. James says "Visit the widow and fatherless." Forestry does this. It visits its sick, it provides for their needs, it provides for the deepest sorrow of life when life's lamp grows dim, it makes provision for the widow and fatherless in their affliction. Then again the heart is always hungry, no man lives alone. Fraternal Friendship is a stay to the soul. Forestry provides and exemplifies it. Let no man stand outside its gates. He that provideth not for his own house is worse than an infidel. Brethren, let your nearest and dearest convictions and desires be to cherish and perpetuate your noble Canadian Order of Foresters. Let its courts be pure and healthy and unspotted from the world. Let Truth, Fidelity

and Brotherly Love be its foundation stones—Your duty is to be useful. The sense of duty is the foundation of rights. Duties and rights stand and fall together. The Foresters Constitution and union is a glorious one. It is a precious legacy to you. Carry it on in the true spirit of the great Brotherhood man Jesus Christ, and it will go down honored to your children, and children's children. And generations yet unborn shall enjoy its privileges and blessings as you have done. And the sick, the widow and the fatherless will in their joy thank God for the benefits of such a society that has helped them in their widowhood and orphanhood. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this to visit the widow and fatherless in their affliction and keep himself unspotted from the world. May Purity the latter part of this text, be the strength of your Courts and the level of all your work.

The following address was afterwards presented to the Rev. J. A. Winfield.
KENSINGTON, P. E. I., Sept. 7th, 1908.
To the Rev. J. A. Winfield.
The members of Court Hattie Stewart, 808 C. O. F. wish to put on record their high appreciation of the excellent service that you conducted yesterday in connection with the anniversary celebration of the establishment of their court.
Never in the history of the Court has there been so successful an event, and not a little of this is due to the very instructive and edifying sermon that you preached on the occasion. Therefore in the name of the Court we are directed to convey to you their sincere thanks.
J. F. SEMPLÉ
GEO. MURRAY
R. T. MOASE
H. R. MOASE
ISAAC LOWTHER
GORDON TUPLIN
D. F. MACKAY M. D.

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